

Quarterly Newsletter

October, November, December 2011

In This Issue:

History of Soil & Water Dist.....	2
Cost-Share Practices.....	2
Hoop Houses (continued)	3
From Pyramid to Plate	3
New Funding Opportunity	4
State Bull Testing Law.....	4

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Phone: 573-546-6518
ken.wooten@swcd.mo.gov
terri.matthews@swcd.mo.gov

*Preserving Soil & Water
through Conservation*

4-H Membership Drive

This month, Iron County 4-H is conducting a membership drive for youth and adults who would like to take part in one of the largest youth organizations in the United States. 4-H is open to all kids who are aged 5 thru 18, and to all caring adults who would like to make a difference in the life of a child.

4-H has a long tradition in Iron County—the very first club in Missouri was started right here, in 1914. The members of that club were all high school boys, who each grew an acre of corn. When their fathers and grandfathers saw how well their corn grew, using modern methods taught to them by the Extension agent, the new methods spread rapidly thru the community. Girls in the community soon joined the clubs—they were taught new ways of canning garden vegetables so they would last thru the winter.

While some modern 4-H'ers still grow corn and learn to cook, 4-H is so much more! Projects include everything from rocketry to livestock, to learning how to start a small business, to shooting sports, to theatre and public speaking. All these projects are taught by local, caring adult volunteers who have an interest in helping young people learn.

4-H is the youth education function of University of Missouri Extension. 4-H teaches kids facts and skills they need to complete their projects, allows kids to enjoy the help of caring adults, and it teaches responsibility. 4-H members pick a project that they are interested in, and they see that project to completion. If they want, they can move to the next level, and learn more, or they can switch to another activity.

The Iron County club meets once a month—project meetings are arranged between members and adults, and include at least 6 hours of contact time, spent learning and practicing new skills. Towards the end of the 4-H year, usually in August, the club will have an achievement day, or take part in a county fair, showing animals or exhibiting crafts, posters, artwork or doing a demonstration of what they have learned.

4-H, of course, cannot function without enthusiastic parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and neighbors who enjoy working with youth. If you have a hobby, interest or skill you would like to pass along, there are kids who want to learn.

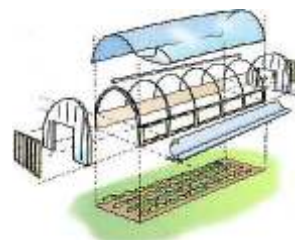
If this sounds like something you and your children would enjoy, join us on Sunday, October 9th at 2 pm at the Lions Club Fairgrounds on M Highway in Ironton. For more information, call the Iron County Extension office at 546-7515. Don't miss out on a chance to help your child become a competent, capable, caring, and contributing member of our community!



Hoop Houses Can Offer Season Extension

By Donna Aufdenberg

There has been growing interest in using hoop houses and high tunnels to extend the garden season by commercial growers as well as home gardeners. A hoop house is a low-cost, poly covered, unheated structure used for



(continued on page 3)

Iron County Soil & Water Conservation District

History of the Soil and Water Conservation District

In the 1930s, as the Dust Bowl swept across the nation relocating an estimated 300 million tons of soil, Americans realized the devastating effects of soil erosion. Legislation began to take shape to better manage and conserve the nation's soil. Despite these actions, Missouri was still plagued with high erosion rates.

In 1982, Missouri was losing soil at a rate of 10.9 tons per acre each year on cultivated cropland. A one-tenth-of-one-percent parks, soils and water sales tax was passed by Missouri voters in 1984 to fund state parks and soil and water conservation efforts. Prior to the passage of the sales tax, Missouri had the second highest rate of erosion in the nation. Almost two-thirds of Missouri voters renewed the tax in 1988 and 1996. In 2006, the tax passed by its highest percentage to date (70.8).

Since 1982, Missouri's erosion rate dropped more than any other state. It is estimated that more than 148 million tons of soil have been saved since the start of the sales tax, but millions of tons of soil still wash away every year on cultivated cropland in Missouri.

The majority of the soils side of this tax has been used to assist agricultural landowners through voluntary programs that are developed by the Soil and Water Districts Commission. They are administered by the Soil and Water Conservation Program through district boards in each of the 114 counties.

The cost-share program provides financial incentives to landowners for up to 75 percent of the cost for installation of soil conservation practices that prevent or control excessive erosion. Soil and water conservation districts provide technical support with the design, implementation and maintenance of practices.

By promoting good farming techniques that help keep soil on the fields and waters clean, each soil and water conservation district is conserving the productivity of Missouri's working lands.

For the 2011 Fiscal Year, Iron County landowners received \$83,636.34 total, for the following practices: \$30,197.31 in Sensitive Areas, \$16,934.30 in Grazing Management, \$28,384.48 in Sheet & Rill/Gully Erosion and \$8,120.25 in Woodland Exclusion.

Cost-Share Practices Available

Sheet and Rill Erosion: **Sheet** erosion occurs when a very thin layer of soil erodes and often goes unnoticed. **Rill** erosion happens when a concentrated flow of water causes small channels to develop. Left untreated, the most productive part of the soil will be lost. Funding is available to establish vegetative cover or construct terraces, diversions or windbreaks.

Gully Erosion: Gully erosion is severe erosion in which trenches are cut into the soil by running water. Water is channeled across unprotected land and the soil is washed away along drainage lines. By diverting the water flow and stabilizing the gully, this problem can be overcome with terrace systems, diversion, establishing permanent vegetative cover, or the construction of sod waterways or water impoundment reservoirs.

Woodland Erosion: Soil, waterways and timber production suffer when woodlands are grazed. The removal of soil or vegetation through animal feeding and trampling or improper tree harvesting allows soil to become susceptible to erosion. Landowners are encouraged to exclude livestock from the woodland area, restore skid trails and logging roads during timber harvesting and install water bars as diversions to prevent erosion on long, narrow slopes.

Sensitive Areas: Agricultural land along streams, springs or fields that has the potential to preserve water quality by filtering and absorbing pollutants is known as a sensitive area. Buffers collect and filter out sediment and other nutrients that run off of agricultural fields. Funding is available to install buffers, field borders, filter strips, riparian forest buffers and exclude livestock from streams while providing alternative water.

Groundwater Protection: Groundwater is water beneath the earth's surface that fills pores between materials such as sand, soil or gravel. Funding is available to install a composting facility, spring development or close an abandoned well, which can have an impact on water quality.

Streambank Erosion: Landowners are losing land to streambank erosion every year. Streambanks can be protected by providing adequate vegetation, stabilizing the bank. Water quality can also be improved.

Grazing Management: Missouri ranks third in the nation for cow/calf production, which utilizes the many acres of pastureland in the state. Installing a grazing system will reduce feed costs, improve profitability, reduce or prevent erosion and protect water quality.

Now is a great time to see if you qualify for the Cost-Share Program. To set up an appointment or for more information on the Cost-Share program, please call our office @ 573-546-6518 or visit our website at: www.swcd.mo.gov/iron

No-till Drill
Available for Rent
\$8.00 per Acre

Call 573-546-6518
For more information



Soil test kits are available through the Extension office

(continued)

growing plants. It relies exclusively on solar heating. The plastic allows in sunlight, traps warm air and shields crops from the elements. Many have a passive ventilation system which mean on warm late fall and winter days, you'll find yourself having to exhaust the warm air. A high tunnel model has roll up sides and ends for added ventilation.

What can you grow in these structures without heat? Most of the cole crops such as cabbage and broccoli do well. Greens, lettuce, spinach, swiss chard do exceptionally well. Root crops such as radishes, turnips, and carrots also thrive. However, warm season crops that need lots of sunlight and a lot of warmth will benefit from supplemental lights and heat.

Hoop houses can be any size. A smaller house can bank thermal energy using solar heating methods. This can be used to moderate the nighttime temperatures. Large greenhouses lose the thermal energy faster. The question for most gardeners is how big do you need it? Most people with greenhouse structures will tell you to double the size you think you need because you can always use more room.

If you desire a hoop house, start looking at some existing ones in the local area to get some ideas. Shop around and look at the different features on kits and models. If you need help, call Donna at the Bollinger County Extension Center in (573-238-2420).

From Pyramid to Plate

By Judy Lueders, Nutrition and Health Education Specialist

The USDA has had visual food guides since the 1940s in an effort to educate Americans on healthy food choices. The latest effort to educate us on healthy food choices is the MyPlate which can be used along with the MyPyramid. Even with the large amount of educational effort surrounding the Pyramid, Americans continue to be overweight and make poor food choices as they relate to health.

There are three main points to get across with this new visual and campaign: Balancing Calories, Foods to Increase, and Foods to Reduce. These themes are based on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The USDA has ten tips that they suggest to create a "great plate".

The first tip is to **balance calories** and physical activity. Individual calorie needs are based on age, gender and activity level. You can go to the MyPlate website on the internet (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate/index.aspx>) to get a personal assessment to determine how many calories you might need to control your weight.

Being physically active is good for health in general and also for weight control.

The second tip is to **enjoy your food, but eat less**. Americans do not always focus on the eating experience. When you are watching TV or being rushed through a meal, it is hard to pay attention to how much you are eating and how full you feel. We do not learn to pay attention to bodily hunger and fullness cues before or during meals. This frequently leads to overeating.

The third tip is to **avoid oversized portions**. Studies show that people that use smaller plates, bowls, and glasses tend to consume less calories, so this may be of help in portion control. Restaurant portions are generally huge, so choose the smallest options, share a meal, or plan to take part of the meal home.

The fourth tip is to be conscious to choose **foods to eat more often**. Vegetables, fruits, fat free or low fat dairy products are foods to focus on. These foods provide lots of nutrients, and fiber.

The fifth tip is to **make half your plates fruits and vegetables**. Choose some red, orange and dark green vegetables every day. Use fruits in the meals.

The sixth tip is to **switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%)milk**. All the nutrition are in these dairy products, but they have less calories and saturated fats.

The seventh tip is to **make half of your grains whole grains**. A wide variety of whole grain cereals and breads are available in the stores. Substitute some of the whole grain products for at least half of the grain products used each day. This will provide more nutrients and fiber to the diet.

The eighth tip is to be aware of **foods to eat less often**. Foods to avoid are foods such as processed sweets, pizza, fatty meats, and processed meats which are high in solid fats, added sugar and salt. These foods should be eaten only occasionally.

The ninth tip is to **compare sodium in foods**. Read food labels and look for terms such as "low sodium", "reduced sodium", and "no salt added". Be aware of sodium in soups, processed foods, breads, and frozen and processed meats.

The tenth tip is to **drink water instead of sugary drinks**. Americans get a large portion of their calories and sugar from soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks. These calories could be used more wisely on foods that supply some nutrition.

Try to make your plate look like the graphic by filling half the plate with fruits and vegetables, then add a serving of whole grains and a serving of a high protein food for a "great plate".



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New Funding Opportunity to Restore Glade & Woodland Habitat

The USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) are teaming up to help Iron County landowners restore glades & woodlands within certain priority areas of the county.

Glades are small, rocky openings on hillsides and ridge tops where layers of rock cut through the surface. Woodland is more than another general term for forest. Ecologically, true open woodlands are characterized as having a canopy cover of over-story trees of 30-80%. The open understory and sparse canopy allows sunlight to reach the ground, promoting the growth of a diverse layer of grasses, forbs and sedges. Today, most woodlands and glades are over-stocked with a closed canopy of trees and little or no ground vegetation. (continued below)



Iron County
250 S Main St
Ironton, MO 63650

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Ironton, MO 63650

*Hoop Houses
*4-H Membership Drive
*Cost-Share Program
*From Pyramid to Plate

Glades support a unique variety of plants and animals not found in the surrounding woodland and forest habitats. Prickly Pear Cactus and Collared Lizards are just two unusual species that you might find on a high quality glade. Turkeys also enjoy the openness at eye level of a glade and woodland.

A major enemy of glades is the cedar tree. Glade plants and animals depend on the sun. Cedar trees can grow in rocky soil and will eventually take over a glade, turning it into a thicket that nothing can walk through. In the past, natural wildfires swept through glades and kept the trees from taking over. Today, we control wildfires for safety reasons. But to maintain a healthy glade, owners and managers need to occasionally burn the area when they can do so safely and cut down the cedar trees. Without management, glades and woodlands will eventually disappear.

Iron County is rich in glades and woodlands. Cost share money is now available to landowners who wish to open their glades and woodlands back up. Money to do "woody cover control", ie., remove cedar and other trees that do not belong on a glade, and to conduct a prescribed burn or hire the services of a trained conservation contractor to do the woody cover control and burn for you, are now available.

Call Rob Morrow, NRCS District Conservationist at (573) 756-6488 ext. 3 for more details and to sign-up for this new opportunity.

State Bull Testing Law Begins September 1st

By Kendra Graham

The Missouri Department of Agriculture has issued a new state animal health law affecting breeding bulls. After September 1, 2011 bulls must be tested for trichomoniasis, also called trich, before being sold or leased for breeding purposes. Trich has caused 40 to 70 percent loss of pregnancies in some Missouri cow herds according to Dr. Craig Payne, University of Missouri Extension veterinarian. Payne also said that the disease has been found in more than 30 Missouri counties and incidences will increase because of the testing requirement.

Trich is a protozoan organism that lives in the lining of the penis and sheath of the bull. The bull and the cows will show no signs of infection. Symptoms of an infected herd are increased calving interval or open cows. Exposed cows will typically abort 15-80 days after exposure then return to heat one to three months later. However, some cows may take up to six months to clear the infection. Rarely cows can remain chronically infected, deliver a normal calf and infect a bull the next breeding season. Bulls less than 4 years of age may clear themselves of the infection but bulls older than 4 years tend to be infected for life.

There is no treatment or cure for trich and vaccines have proved ineffective. Prevention is the best way to manage the disease, which is why the focus is on bulls. According to the rules non-virgin bulls and all bulls 24 months or older going to livestock auctions must be tested if they are not going to slaughter. Also, non-virgin bulls and all bulls 30 months or older sold off the farm, leased, traded or bartered must be tested within 30 days prior to change of ownership. Any bull testing positive must go to slaughter and the cow herd will be quarantined. Contact your local veterinarian if you need a trich test performed. More information about the disease can be found at <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/G2122>. The link to the official rules from the Missouri Department of Agriculture can be found at <http://www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/2csr/2c30-2.pdf>